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ABSTRACT

This document presents a three-step model for providing teachers with basic information on year-round or extended school plans. As a first step, descriptions of basic plans are given. The four used in this paper are Staggered Quarter for All, Full 48-week School Year for All, Voluntary Summer Program, and A Summer Program for Professional Personnel. After there is a common basis of understanding of the general characteristics of the year-round or extended school and of the four specific plans, the second step is initiated. This involves dividing the group into smaller groups, one for each plan to be discussed, and having the individuals in each group choose the role they wish to play: principal, superintendent, teacher, school board member, townsperson, or student. The task of each group is to discuss the plan assigned with reference to their own particular school situation, determine the advantages and disadvantages of the plan, and make a recommendation to the larger group. As the third step, each group reports its findings, and the facilitator of the simulation again summarizes some of the characteristics of the plans which have been used and mentions some of the more common modifications of these plans and locations where implementation is taking place. He might also summarize some of the advantages and disadvantages of various plans as derived from the national conferences on the topic. (DDO)

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Simulation Activity for Initiating Thinking About Year Around School Plans

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A frequent request by teachers is to have some basic familiarity with what year-round or extended school really means. In response to this request a similulation has been developed which provides some basic information on the subject, but more important it gets the teachers to thinking about the advantages and disadvantages of such programs as they relate to their own school setting. The purpose of this brief paper is to present the nucleus of the simulation so that others might try it and improve it in ways appropriate to their needs.

The activity involves approximately three hours of time as a minimum. The number of participants required depends upon the number of plans which are considered. The simulation as described in the following allows for approximately 20 as a minimum and 40 as a maximum.

Step 1 (30-60 minutes) This part of the activity involves developing a common base of understanding with regard to year-around or extended school ideas. This can be done by having the participants do advanced reading in the subject, through lecture-discussion or a combination of the two.

The purpose of this step is to bring out information that describes basic plans, but not to dwell on advantages and disadvantages. One way to tackle this problem is to describe several basic plans, I commonly work with four. The four plans are (1) Staggered Quarter for All, (2) Full 48-week School Year for All, (3) Voluntary Summer Program, and (4) A Summer Program for Professional Personnel.

After there is a common basis of understanding of the general characteristics of the year-round or exterded school and of the four specific plans Step 2 is initiated.

Step 2 (approximately 60 minutes) Have all members of the group number-off according to the number of plans which will be used in the

simulation. If you use four plans have the group number-off 1-4. All the ones should collect in one part of the room, twos in another and so on. After the primary groups have formed, then have participants in groups 1, 2, and 3 (see Figure 1,2,3) number-off 1-6 until each member has a number. The individuals in group 4 should number-off 1-5 (see Figure 4). At this point pass out the simulation sheets. Each member of each group should receive a sheet with a description of the plan appropriate to his group. Each group should designate a recorder who will record ideas and be responsible for reporting back to the large group in Step 3.

FIGURE I
Plan 1

Staggered Quarter for All

48 week, four quartered, staggered vacation school year. Student must attend 3 out of every 4 quarters.
Participant No.

4= principal
5= superintendent
1= teachers
2= school board members
3= townspeople
6= students

Record
Advantages
Disadvantages
Recommendations

FIGURE II
Plan 2

Full 48 - Week School Year for All

Full 48 - week school year in which all students attend four quarters of approximately 12 weeks each. Four weeks of vacation are distributed throughout the year (maybe at Christmas, Easter, etc.)
Participant No.

4= principal
5= superintendent
1= teachers
2= school board members
3= townspeople
6= students

Record
Advantages
Disadvantages
Recommendations

FIGURE III
Plan 3

Voluntary Summer Program

A regular 36 to 40 week program with a voluntary summer program varying in length form 4 to 12 weeks. Summer work involves some remedial and accelerated work, but primary concentration is on offerings over and beyond what is offered in the regular term.
Participant No.

4= principal
5= superintendent
1= teachers
2= school board members
3= townspeople
6= students

Record
Advantages
Disadvantages
Recommendations

FIGURE IV
Plan 4

A Summer Program for Professional Personnel

A regular 36 to 40 week program for students with the faculty serving an additional 10 to 12 weeks on assignments devoted to improving the program of services to students for the coming year.
Participant No.

4=
5=
1=
2=
3=

Record
Advantages
Disadvantages
Recommendations

It should be made clear that the number each individual has in the group determines which role he or she is to assume. For example, the person(s) who is a two will assume the role of a school board member(s) (see Figures I-IV). Each member should contribute to the group discussion according to his or her assigned role.

The task of each group is to discuss the plan they have been assigned with reference to their own particular school situation, determine the advantages and disadvantages of the plan and make a recommendation to the group. The recommendation can take numerous forms, but normally it will be either to reject the plan, accept the plan, or to accept the plan with some type of modification.

Step 3 (30-60 minutes) Each group should report the advantages and disadvantages of their particular plan and their recommendation(s). The recorder has primary responsibility in the reporting, but it is desirable to encourage input from other group members. Questions from members of

groups other than the one presenting should be encouraged.

After all of the groups have made their presentations it works well to have the facilitator of the simulation summarize again the characteristics of the major plans which have been used in the simulation and mention some of the more common modifications of these plans and locations where implementation is taking place. It is worthwhile also to summarize some of the advantages and disadvantages of various plans as derived from National Conferences on the topic. This latter input on the part of the facilitator functions to reinforce the participants in terms of the work completed in Step 2.

My experience has been that participants in such a simulation have keen insights into the relationship of year-around or extended school year plans to their schools. The advantages and disadvantages are described very thoroughly and the participants complete the simulation with a functional understanding of the plans.

Useful references for providing basic information on the topic can be obtained by reviewing the ERIC publication Research in Education. Several specific documents I have found useful are EDC22252, The Twelve Month School Year, A Study of the Advantages and Disadvantages of the Four Quarter System; ED040497, 9+ The Year-Round School; ED040498, Mt. Sequoyah National Seminar on Year-Round Education; ED047419, Rescheduled School Year Plans-Research Review; ED044811, Post Conference Report: Extended School Year Conference.